

# What if Jonathan Kozol had written *Savage Inequalities* from Maine?

Presentation

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THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

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AUTHOR OF DEATH AT AN EARLY AGE  
& RACHEL AND HER CHILDREN

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JONATHAN  
KOZOL



SAVAGE  
INEQUALITIES

CHILDREN  
IN AMERICA'S SCHOOLS

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"AN IMPASSIONED BOOK, LACED WITH ANGER AND INDIGNATION,  
ABOUT HOW OUR PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM SCORNS SO MANY OF OUR  
CHILDREN." —ANDREW HACKER, *NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW*

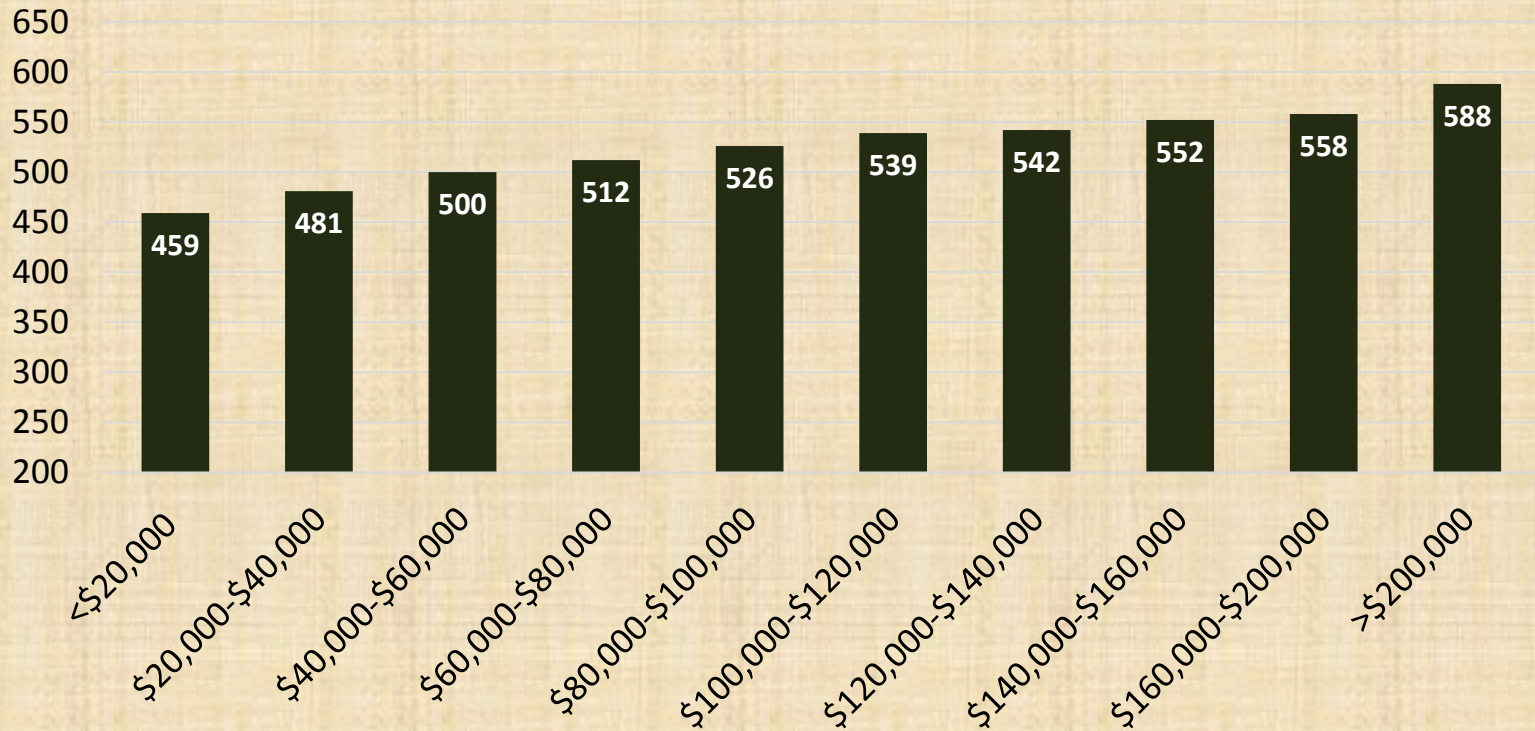
***“Unless we have the wealth to pay for private education, we are compelled by law to go to public school---and to the public school in our district. Thus the state by requiring attendance but refusing to require equity, effectively requires inequality. Compulsory inequality, perpetuated by state law, too frequently condemns our children to unequal lives.”***

Kozol 1991

# **National Income Achievement Gap**

# National Income Achievement Gap

## National SAT Mathematics Scores





# Impacts of Poverty on Achievement

- *Third graders who both live in poverty and read below grade level are three times more likely to dropout of high school than students who have never been poor.*
- *Fourth graders from low income families are likely to be academically three years behind their peers from affluent families.*
- *Nationally, only 33% of high school students from low income households go to college and only 8% will complete a degree with six years of college matriculation.*

# The Widening National Achievement Gap

***“The achievement gap between children from high- and low-income families is roughly 30 to 40 percent larger among children born in 2001 than among those born twenty-five years earlier.”***

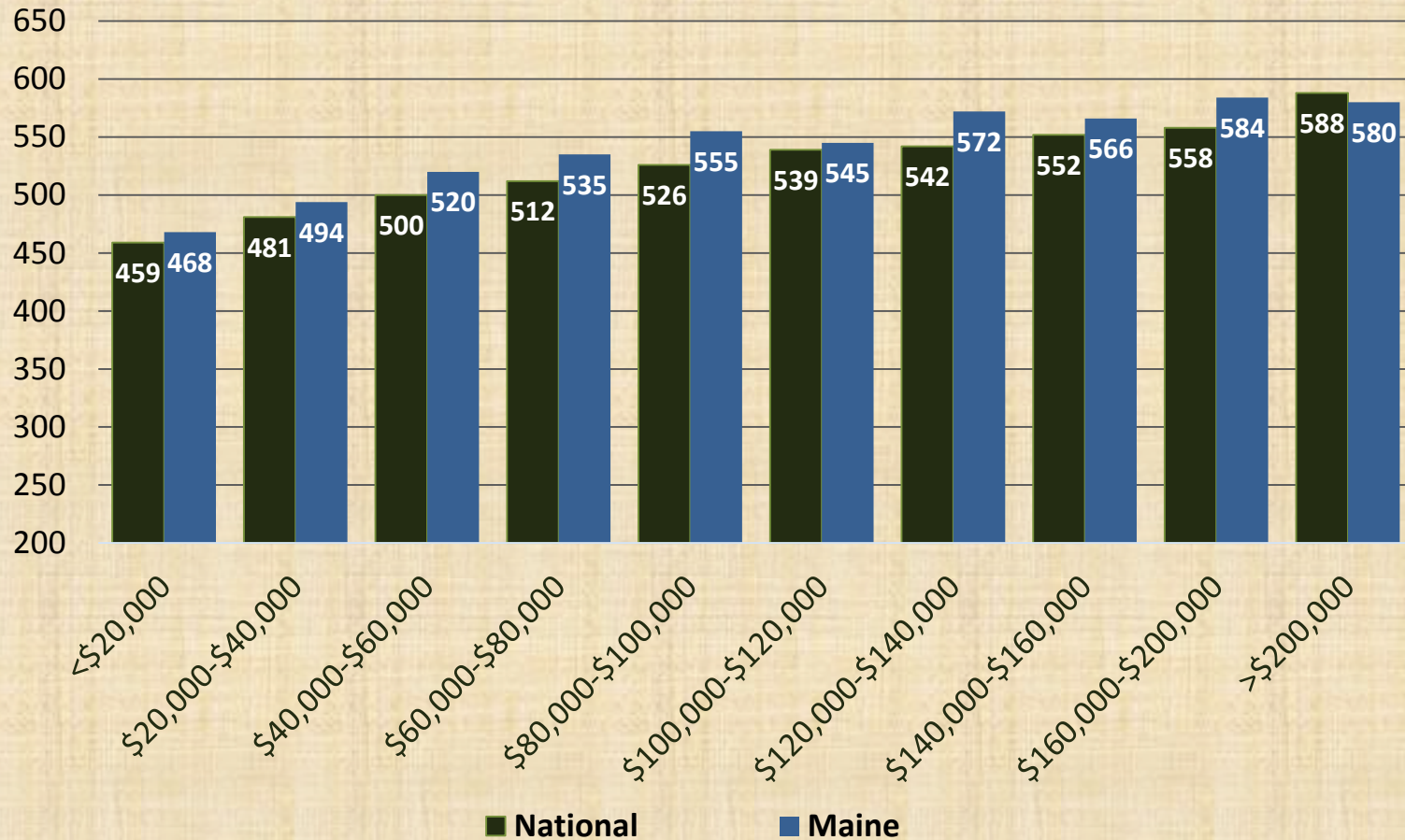
*Reardon 2011*

# **Maine Income Achievement Gap**



# Maine's Income Achievement Gap

## Maine and National Mathematics Scores



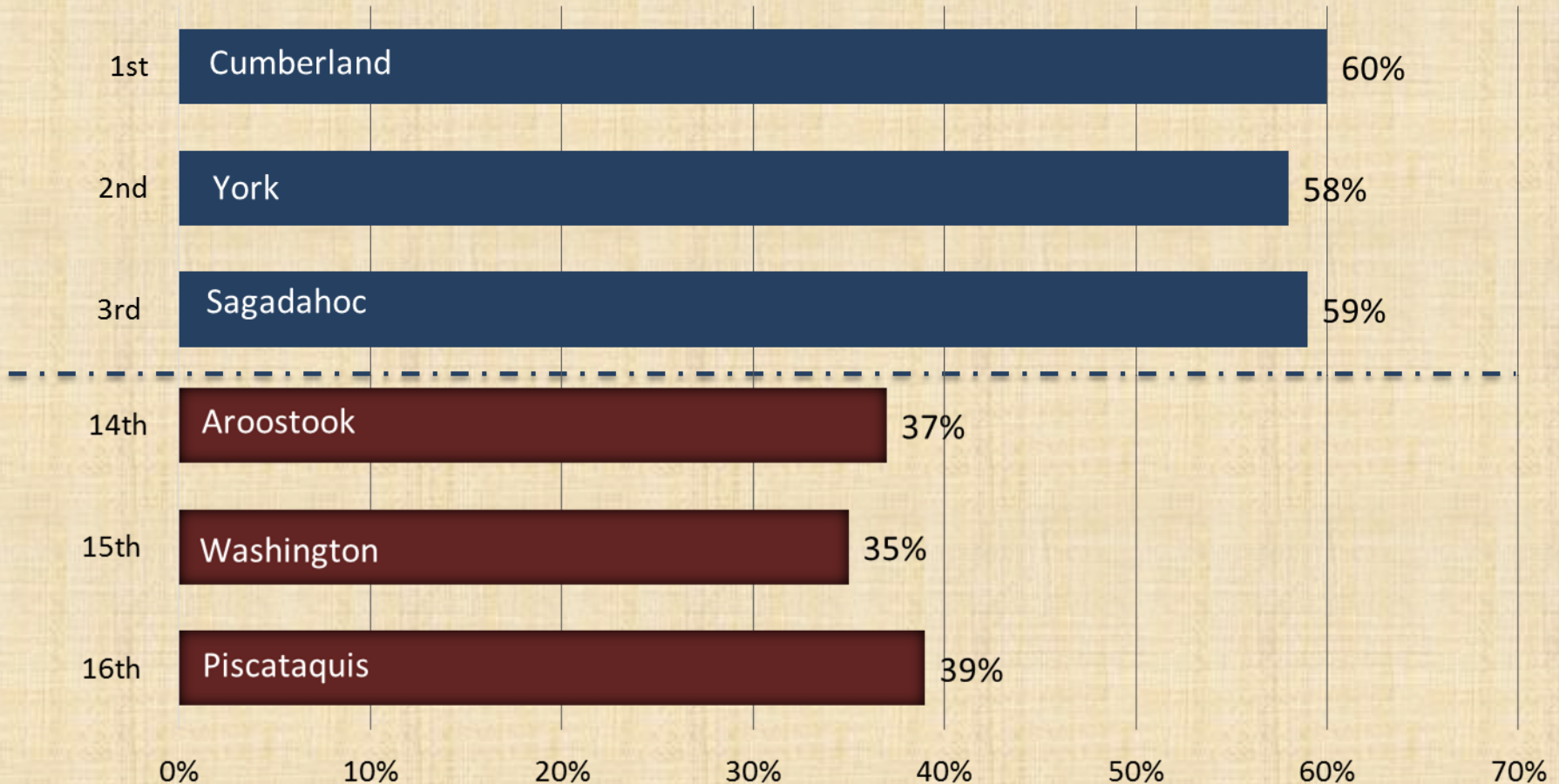
# The Gap in Maine NAEP performance

*In 2015, Maine students who were eligible for free or reduced-price school lunch:*

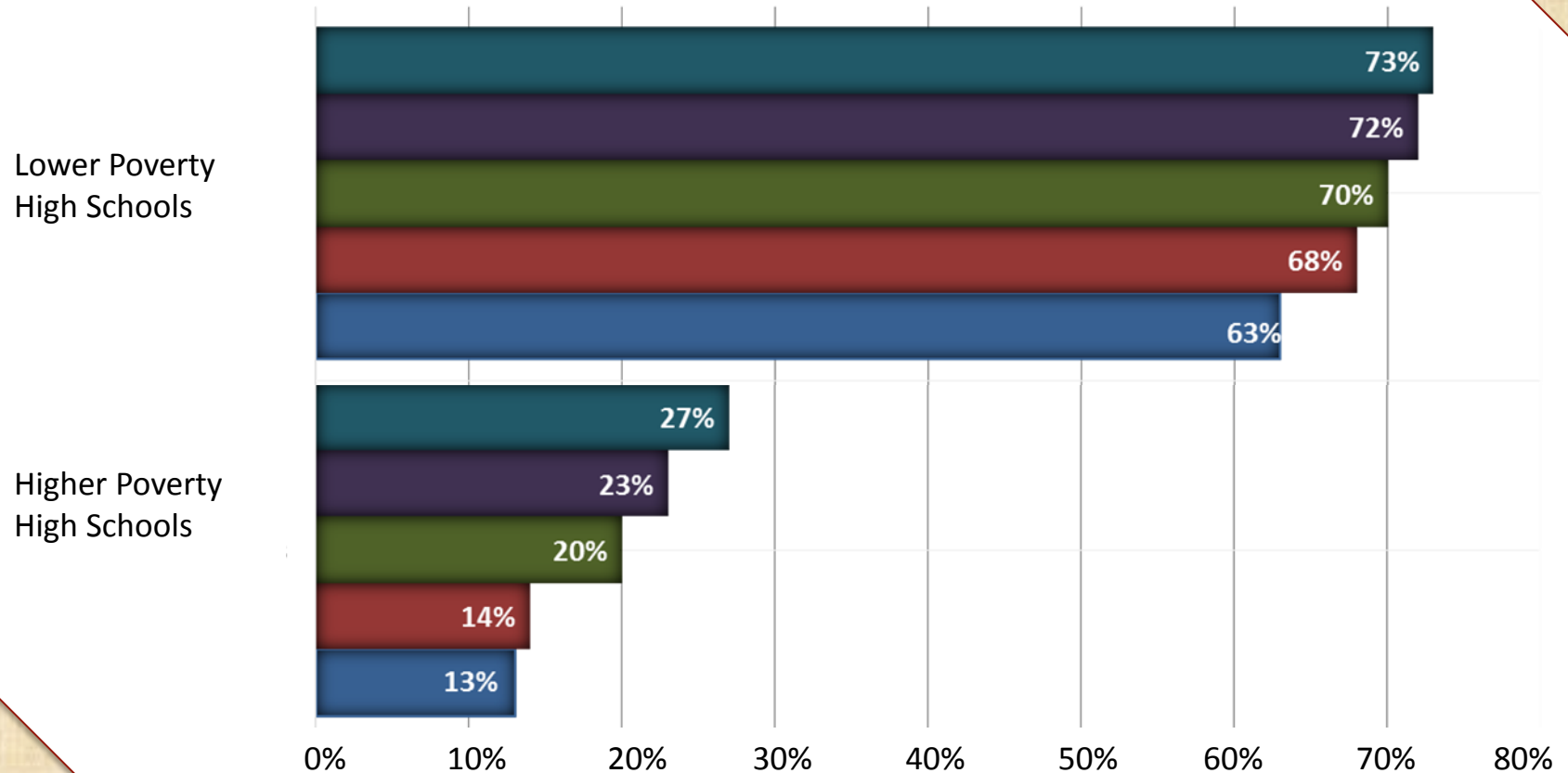
- *had an average mathematics score that was **18 points lower** than for students who were not eligible;*  
*and*
- *had an average reading score that was **20 points lower** than for students who were not eligible.*

The Nation's Report Card (2016)

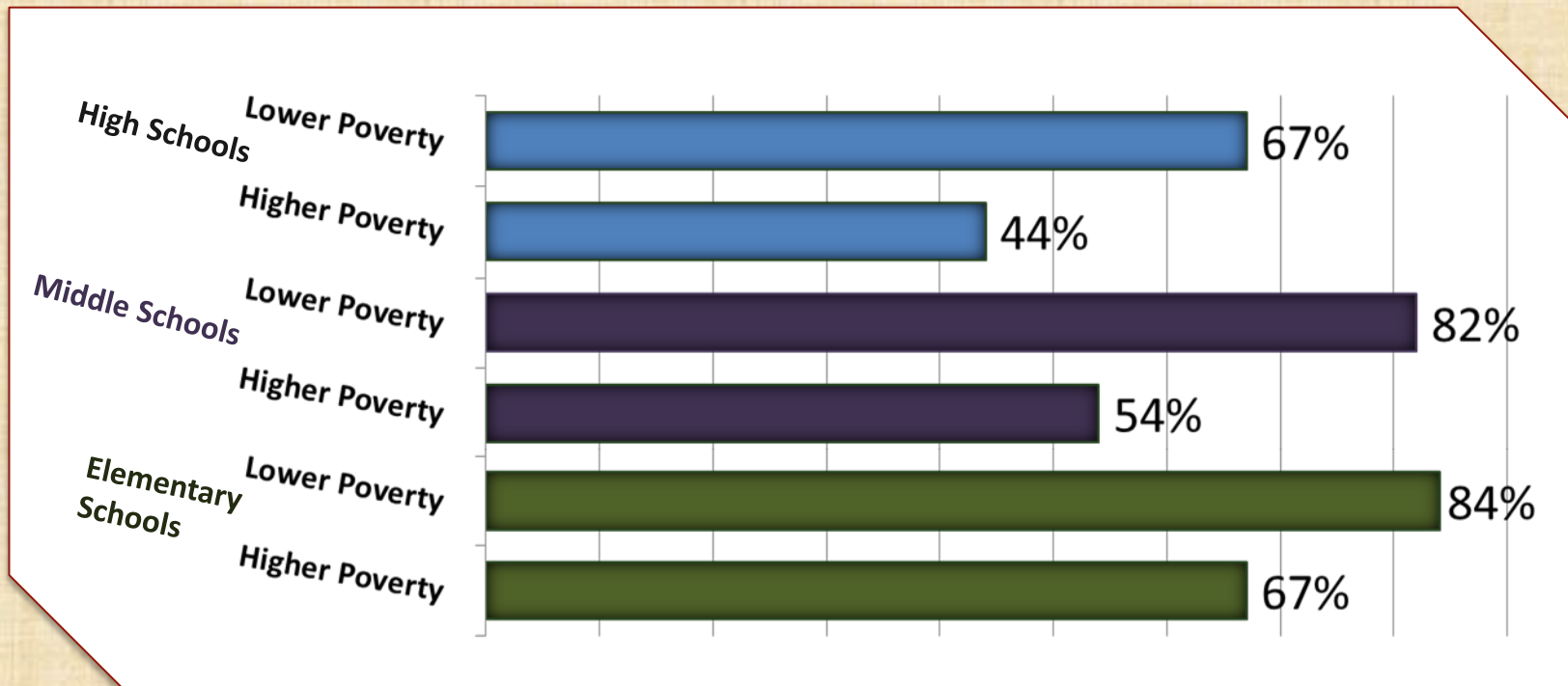
# Income Achievement Gap in Maine Counties



# Percent of High School Proficient Graduates



# Percent of More Affluent Children Proficient in Higher and Lower Poverty Schools

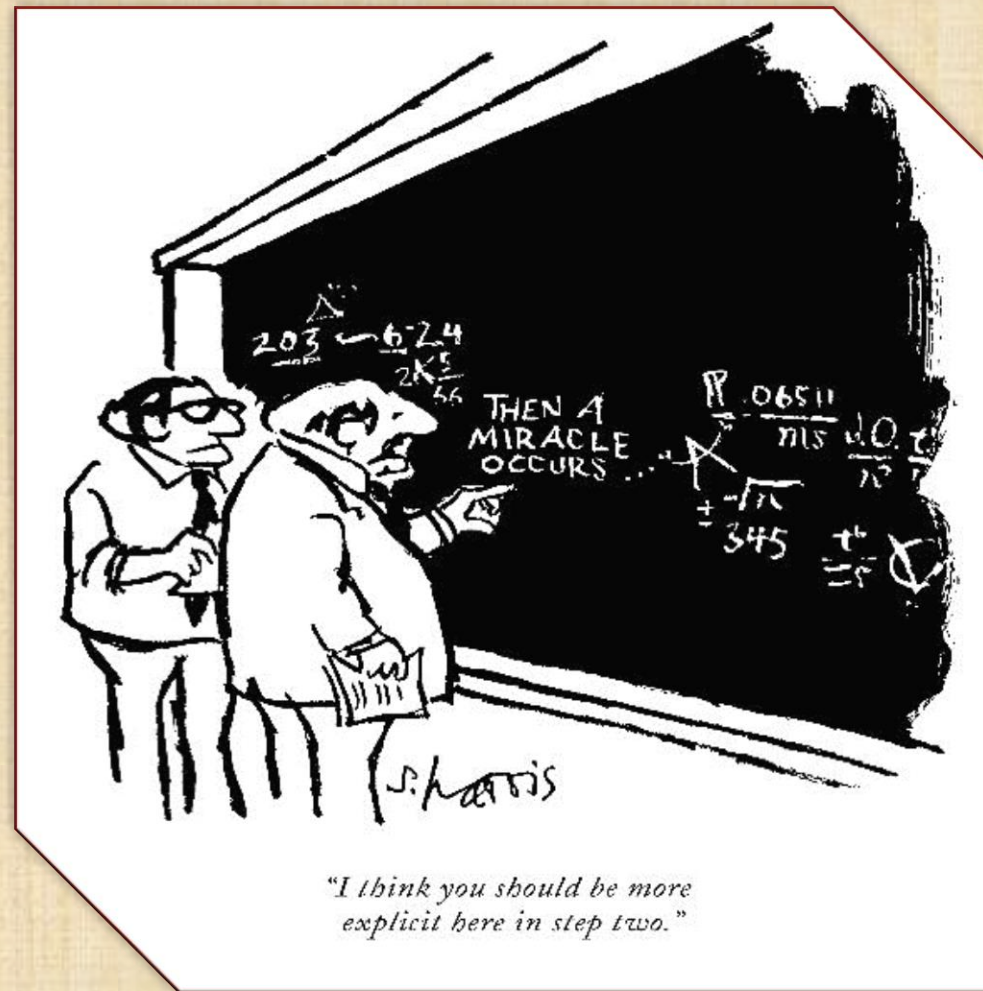




# Failed Policy Initiatives

- Spending more money on our schools;
- Imposing tougher standards;
- Instituting more high stakes tests;
- Having more stringent standards on who can teach;
- Or NCLB;
- Or the new federal legislation, *Every Student Succeeds Act*

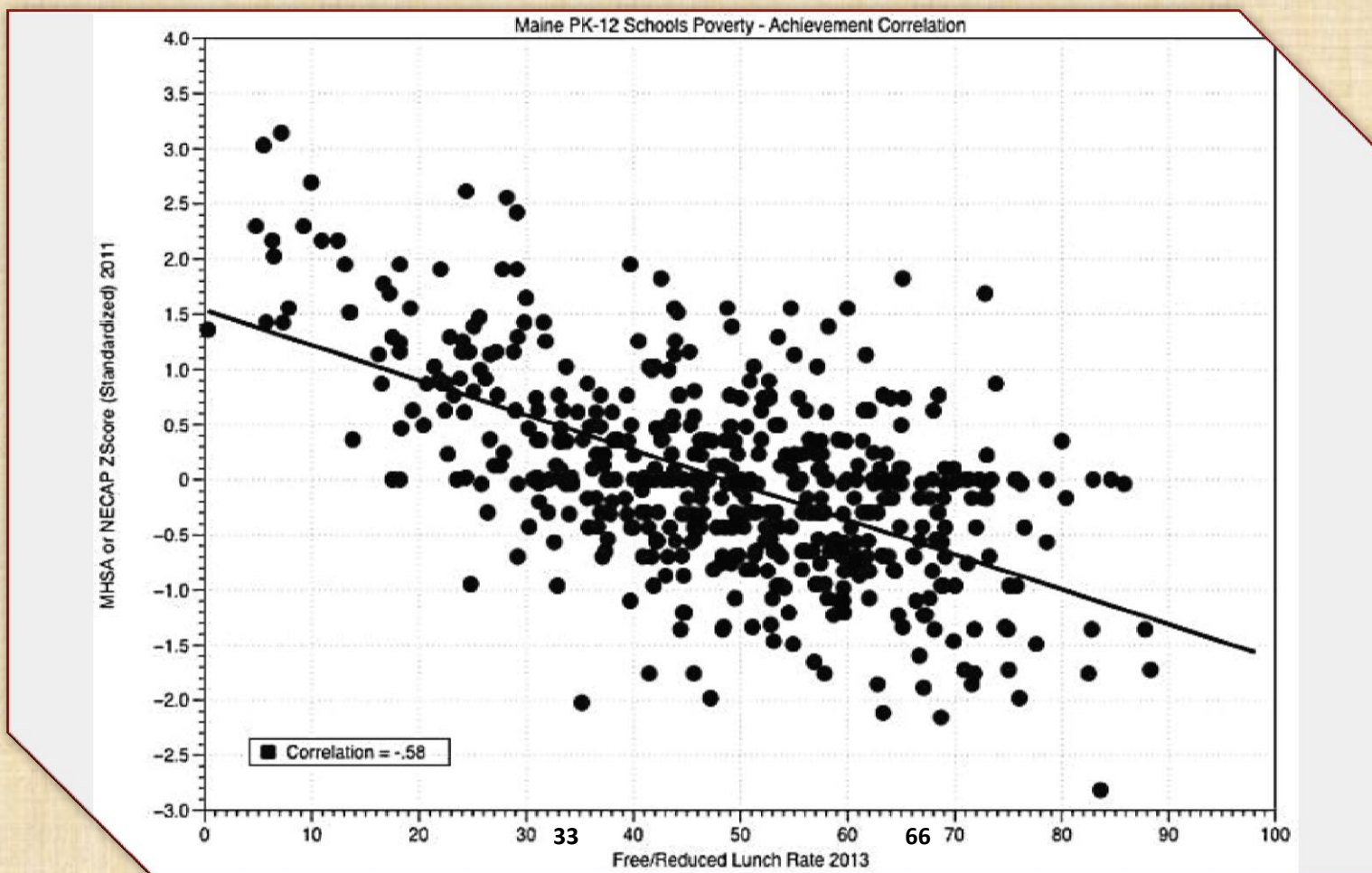
# The Miracle



***“If we do not find ways to reduce the growing inequality in education outcomes---between the rich and the poor---schools will no longer be the great equalizer we want them to be”.***

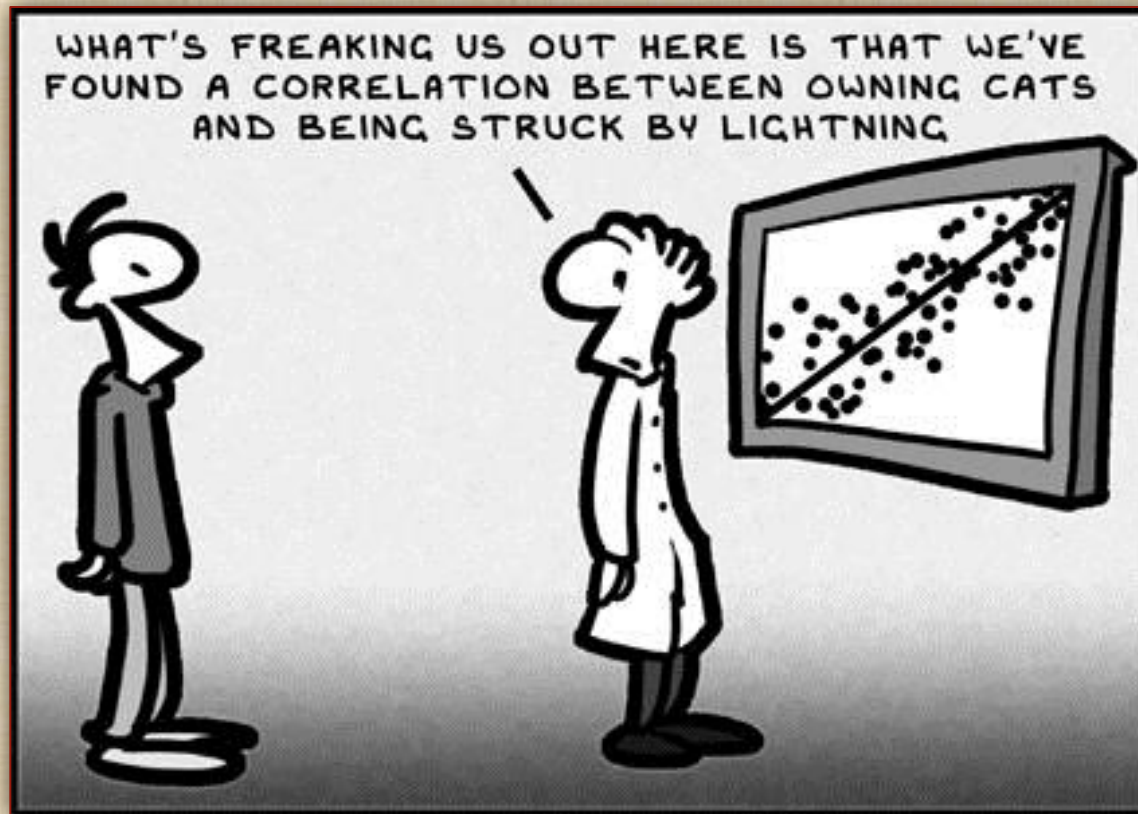
Reardon 2013

# Maine School Performance Poverty Levels and Achievement



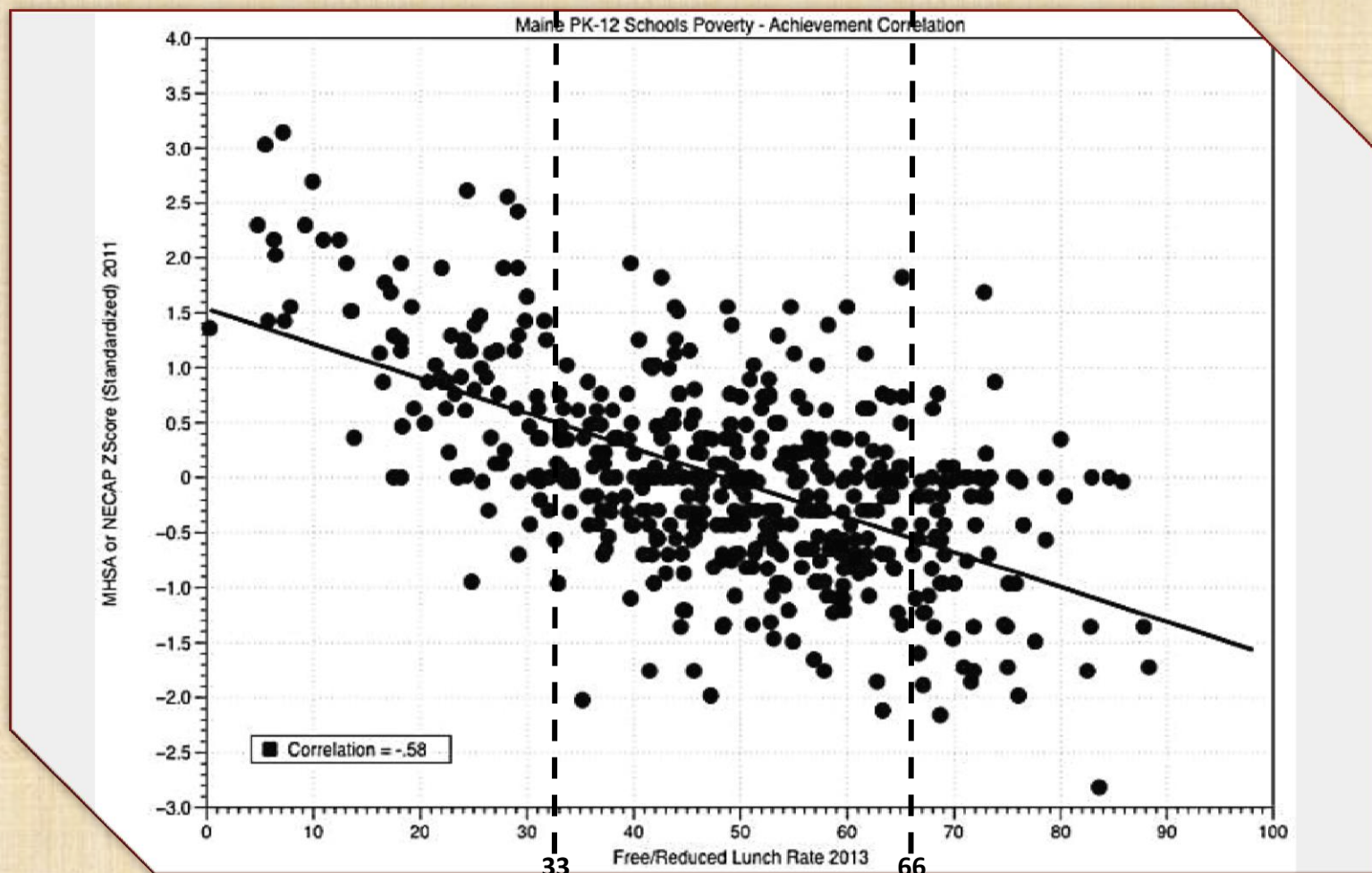


# Cautionary Note: Correlations Are Not Causal





# Maine School Performance Poverty Levels and Achievement



# Maine Schools Defying the Odds





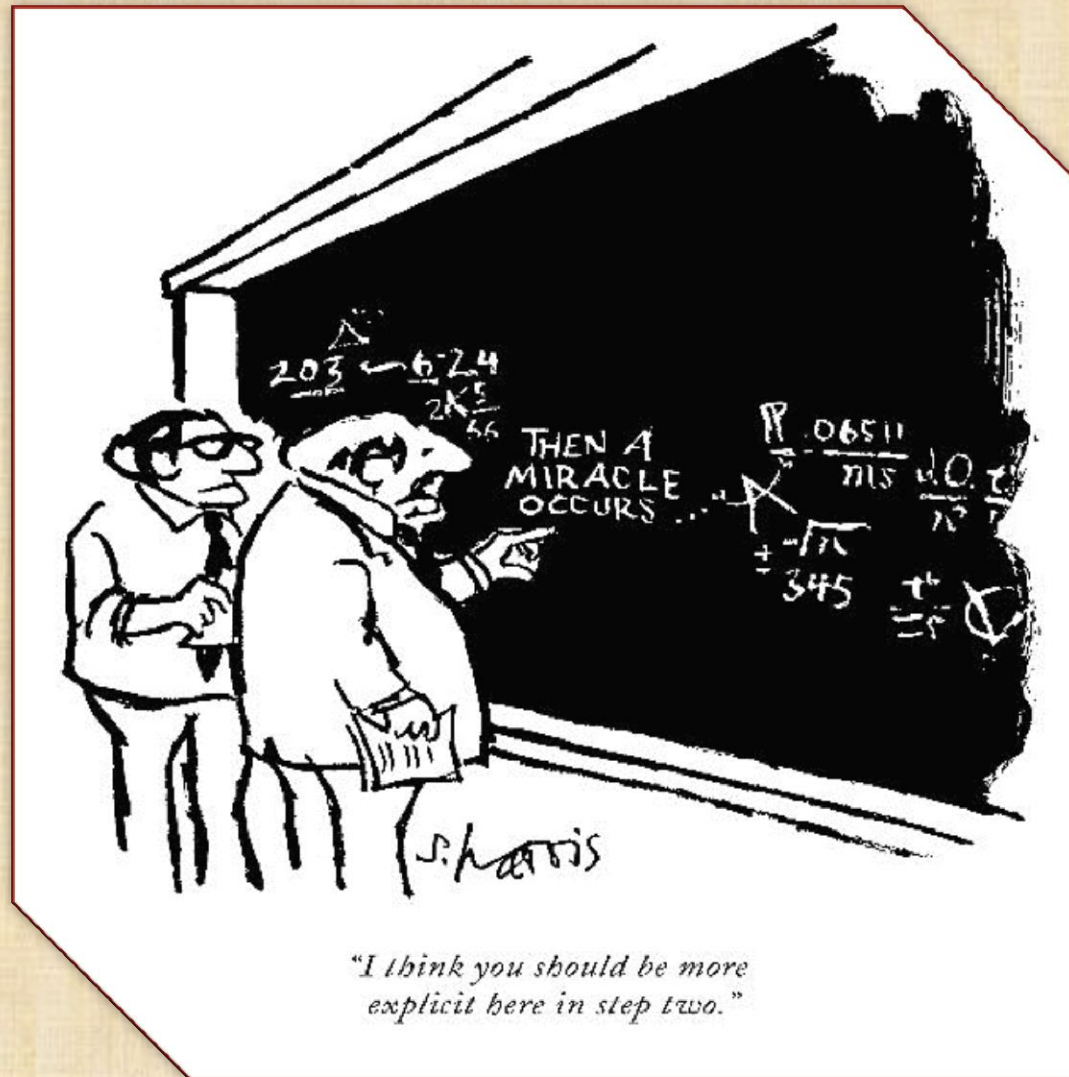
# Digging Deeper into “Defying the Odds” Schools:



# Differences between Higher and Lower Performing Higher Poverty Schools

- School size: **Mixed**
- Experience of teachers: **Mixed**
- Education levels of teachers: **Mixed**
- Student-teacher ratios: **Mixed**
- Percent special needs students: **Mixed**
- Per pupil expenditures: **No differences** (ex. High school)
- Percent of classroom instruction expenditures: **No differences**

# The Miracle

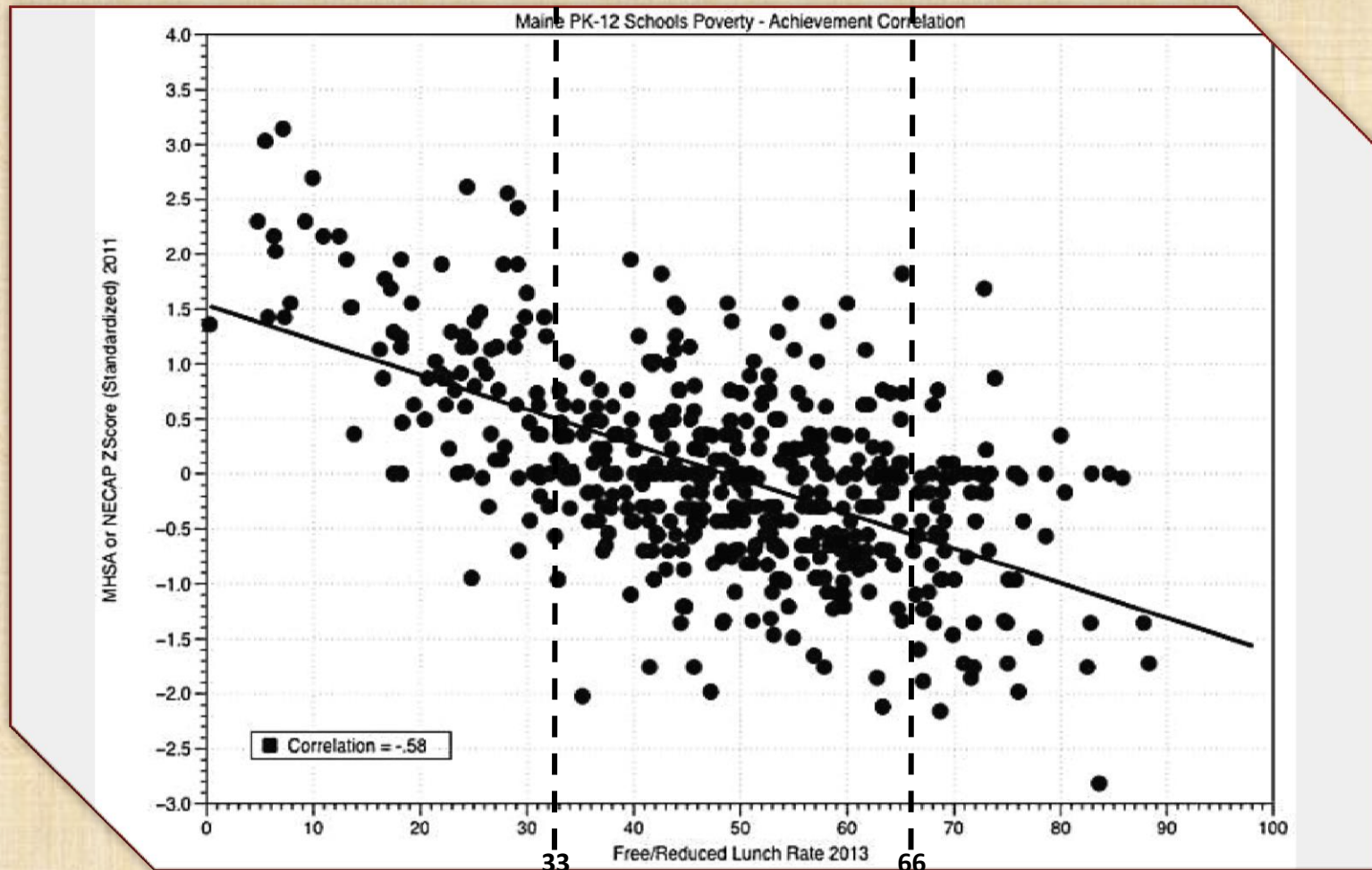




# Study of Sample of Maine Schools

- 39 case studies in sample of Maine's Schools
- Teams of experienced Maine teachers and administrators
- 2-3 day site visits
- Over 550 interviews of students, teachers, administrators, support staff, parents, and community members
- Over 2,200 classroom observations

# Maine School Performance Poverty Levels and Achievement



**What are distinguishing characteristics of these  
Defying the Odds schools?**

# 1. A Central Focus on Developing Deeper Learning

Deeper learning is:

1. Mastering core academic content;
2. Thinking critically, analytically, and creatively;
3. Collaborating;
4. Communicating effectively;
5. Developing the ability to direct their own learning;
6. Developing an academic mindset.

## **2. Data-Informed Decision-Making vs. Data-Driven Decision-Making**

There is collective expertise in gathering data, understanding data, and using this knowledge to improve student learning.

Digging deeper: Beyond the symptoms to the source of the problem.



### **3. Mission-Driven Professional Development**

Vision and goals driven.

Sustained time to “work on the work” of improving instructional practices.

Peer observations: “I think the action is to get teachers into each other’s classrooms. That is where the real improvement is going to happen.”

## **4. Collective Sense of Accountability**

Leaders hold all staff accountable for implementing effective strategies and practices.

Teachers hold colleagues accountable.

Teachers hold students accountable.

Students hold peers accountable.

## Conversation between two 5<sup>th</sup> graders during a math class:

- “Did you finish our homework?”
- “No”
- “Then why weren’t you in the study hall before school this morning? I was there.”

## **5. Efficient Use of Learning Time and Resources**

Learning time (school day schedules, class time, professional meetings, etc.) is resourcefully organized and orchestrated to promote learning.

Reduced transition times.



## **6. Strong and Shared School Leadership**

Leaders who keep the work focused.

Leaders who collaborate.

Leaders who share leadership.

Leaders who lead by example.

## 7. Equity and High Expectations

There are high expectations for ***all*** students and staff as well, and high expectations that staff will promote **equity** for all.

One teacher remarked,

“I really became a teacher for social justice reasons...The point is that every person in our society, every single kid, deserves to be able to do the things in the Common Core Standards.”

# Distinguishing Characteristics Of Defying the Odds Schools

1. Central focus on developing deeper learning.
2. Data-informed decision-making.
3. Mission-driven professional development.
4. Collective sense of accountability.
5. Efficient use of learning time and resources.
6. Strong building level leadership.
7. Equity and high expectations for everyone.

# Distinguishing Characteristics of Defying the Odds Schools

In essence, it is about a **culture**. These defying the odds schools exhibit and live a culture that sets high expectations for everyone, focuses on intellectual work, uses resources wisely and efficiently, and holds everyone accountable for student success.

and

It is all about **equity**. It is about ensuring that **all** students have equitable learning opportunities.



**“ No matter what happens in a child’s home, no matter what other social and economic factors may impede a child, there is no question in my mind that a first-rate school can transform almost anything.”**

Kozol

**“Although poverty and inequality play a powerful role in shaping our children’s educational opportunities, inequality is not inevitable, and poverty is not destiny.”**

Reardon 2011

# The Power of Superintendents

Superintendents have a statistically significant (+.24) impact on student achievement when they:

- 1. *create goal-oriented districts;*
- 2. collaboratively set non-negotiable achievement and instructional goals, and ones that are supported by the school board;
- 3. *monitor attainment of achievement and instructional goals;*
- 4. use resources wisely in support of the achievement and instructional goals; and,
- 5. *provide principals “defined autonomy” in reaching achievement and instructional goals.*

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Waters and Marzano (2006)

**Thank You**



# More Information

More information about the studies is available at: [www.usm.maine.edu/cepare](http://www.usm.maine.edu/cepare) in the Quick Links section.